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ABSTRACT

Undergraduate curriculum changes at Lehman College, City University of New York (CUNY), following the dismantling of a Department of Family and Consumer Studies (home economics), are discussed. Attention is also directed to the history of the Department of Home Economics at the college (1946-1979). The recent changes, which involved a distribution of the undergraduate courses and curricula between two departments, took place during 1980-1982. The family focus and core courses were retained, but home economics was downgraded from departmental to program status under the Department of Specialized Services in Education. Food and nutrition courses were to be offered under a new curricular rubric. "Dietetics, Food, and Nutrition," in the Health Professions Institute. Concerns regarding the historically required content of a home economics curriculum are cited. It is claimed that in spite of provisions that protect the student from arbitrary changes in the curriculum and that provide faculty with guidelines to plan curricular change, the college created a curriculum by administrative fiat. Questions regarding the legitimacy of the changes and the integrity of home economics degrees, the position of the Lehman Senate, and communications with CUNY Central Administration and state officials are addressed. (SW)

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CURRICULUM CONTEXT: CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE OR CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE?

A Case Study

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Abstract

This Case Study examines changes in an undergraduate curriculum over a two-year period (1980-1982) following the dismantling of a Department of Family and Consumer Studies (Home Economics) and the distribution of its undergraduate courses and curricula between two departments. HEGIS program code numbers provide a unique methodology for identifying and interpreting the documentary evidence related to the changes.

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CURRICULUM CONTEXT: CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE OR CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE?

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Today, many institutions of higher education, buffeted by budgetary pressures, a changing student population, and a rapidly changing knowledge base in the sciences, liberal arts, and technology, are embarking on sweeping curricular reforms. University faculty take responsibility for making curriculum in their respective disciplines. It is an honored tenet of academic freedom that curriculum is the province of faculty knowledgeable in a particular discipline. Indeed, making curriculum is a faculty prerogative. It is assumed that the context in which curriculum is designed, debated, and implemented should be reasonably free from interference. Faculty tend to take the curricular context, set forth in documents of governance and carried out in the actions of duly designated and constituted administrative bodies, as a "given" in their day-to-day academic life. The proper functioning of the institution's departments and committees is presumed to assure the "legality" of the actions taken. Not so evident is the question of the legitimacy of actions that may, on their face, appear "legal."

Harold Hodgkinson has observed that "Higher education studies everything except itself."[1] An exception to this is Things Which Are Done in Secret (Dixon 1976), which is a documentary history of academic repression as practiced at one Canadian university.[2] While not adopting Dixon's Marxist paradigm, the present case study addresses itself to the problem of academic introspection posed by Hodgkinson. It examines the changes that occurred in a registered undergraduate curriculum in Home Economics following the administrative reorganization of the Department of Family and Consumer Studies (Home Economics) at Herbert H. Lehman College. Like Dixon's study, it deals with "real world" issues in academia. It details curriculum change in one discipline in one institution in one system from the perspective of a participant-observer. It began, innocently enough, as a study of seemingly routine change and ended with questions related to the validity and integrity of undergraduate degrees and to intrusions on faculty prerogatives in the curriculum-making process.

Herbert H. Lehman College is a senior college in the City University of New York (CUNY) system. At Lehman College, the College curriculum committee processes and presents

curricular changes proposed by Departmental curriculum committees. The College curriculum committee submits its recommendations to the Faculty-Student Senate for a vote. After the vote, the curriculum moves along the administrative pipeline to the Board of Higher Education and the State Education Department. One would assume that what goes in at one end of the pipeline would not emerge changed at the other. At Lehman, the faculty's only real power is exercised collectively when (1) it votes on curriculum, and (2) it votes on the list of candidates to be awarded degrees. The language on the face of a Lehman diploma attests to the fact that the candidate has "completed the requisite course of study" and confers on the graduate "all the rights and immunities and honors thereunto belonging." This is a credential that should have more than face validity, and the Case Study addresses this question. If intellectual honesty be at the heart of the academic enterprise, the academic has the obligation to be loyal to the discipline he or she represents.

A Note on Methodology

Dixon's work stands as a monument to the difficult task of assembling and organizing the documents needed to study

the internal workings of an institution of higher education. The documentary corpus for this study includes over 300 memoranda, letters, minutes, notices, routine items of information, professional association bylaws, field notes, anecdotal records, and excerpts from State education laws and regulations of the State Commissioner of Education. Meridian, the student newspaper, provides another source.

Although documentary evidence provides a primary source of data in descriptive research, the document flow through the educational system (both inside and outside the institution) is not within the investigator's control. In every social system, some people are better positioned to access information than others. There is the all too familiar problem of the investigator being "locked out" of the data. However, the investigator, as an actor in the system, can help to generate data from one source when it is not forthcoming from another.

Documents generated in academe tend to be prolix. The significance of such documents for studies undertaken in a naturalistic setting may be in inverse proportion to their length and/or density. Events often occur simultaneously. The investigator cannot attend two meetings in the same time frame. Some things occur "in secret," beyond the investigator's

awareness. It may take time to access important documents. Nevertheless, in what has facetiously been called the "Miss Marple School of Ethnomethodology," the investigator works with parts of a huge puzzle that simply won't "fit." The absence of parts of the puzzle may have significance, especially when information appears to be deliberately withheld. A series of hypotheses must be tested and discarded. Finally, conclusions must be drawn based on what is available.

Marc Bloch, a French historian of the Annales school, distinguishes between intentional and unintentional evidence. Unintentional evidence is provided by witnesses to events in spite of themselves. Documents may also be witnesses to events beyond their obvious value as primary sources. In this case, the HEGIS code numbers appearing on documents provided such "unintentional evidence."[3] In American education, the HEGIS taxonomy (Higher Education General Information Survey) categorizes instructional programs through a uniform numeric system.

In biochemical research, a radioisotope is used to "flag" a substance as it passes through a living system. Because documents can be subject to various interpretations as they flow through a bureaucratic system, rigor can be introduced

by utilizing HEGIS program code numbers to "flag" documents and compare information.

What's in a Name?

The first point that needs to be addressed in this study is the name of the discipline, department, and curriculum being examined. Murphy (1967) asked the question "What's in a Name?" in relation to Home Economics. In 1902, a number of names (including "Ecology") were considered by a group of educators who had met for a decade to discuss the establishment of a new discipline. They agreed on the name "Home Economics," and in 1908, the American Home Economics Association was founded. The following definition was accepted for the field:

> Home economics, in its most comprehensive sense, is the study of laws, conditions, principles, and ideals which are concerned on the one hand with man's immediate physical environment and on the other with his nature as a social being, and is the study specially of the relation between these two factors. It is a philosophical subject, something to connect and bind together into a consistent whole the pieces of knowledge.[4]

This first definition of the discipline provides the theoretical and philosophical foundation for the development of Home Economics curriculum. It should be stressed that in this writer's view, Home Economics represents a system of

knowledge, not a system of gender roles linked to domesticity. A later definition was provided by Lippeatt and Brown (1965):

> Home economics ... is an applied field of study, built upon many disciplines for the purpose of achieving and maintaining the welfare or well-being of homes and family life in an ever-changing society. Its uniqueness as a field of study lies in its integrative power, because it utilizes basic principles from many disciplines and applies them as a composite in solving the problems faced by individuals and families in day-to-day living.[5]

Often in the field's seventy-five year history, Home Economics educators, practitioners, and administrators have examined names they thought might better reflect the multiple facets of this diverse and changing field. Concerning the importance of a name for a field of study, Murphy wrote:

> Identity as a concept is very elusive, whether it be personal identity, object identity, or the identity of a field. Here we are concerned only with the identity of a field. A name is the distinctive appellation by which a field is known.[6]

Miller (1967) noted that a name takes on added significance when, as is the case here, goals are questioned and social conditions change.[7] A number of Home Economics units changed their names in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Weis, East, and Manning (1974) identified a number of factors that

contributed to the name changes in college and university Home Economics units between 1962-1972. Among these were increased college enrollments, changing courses of study, revised job demands, and government (federal) funding.[8] However, in response to a questionnaire developed by a special committee of the American Home Economics Association, it was found that about 90 percent of the units had retained the name Home Economics. Twenty-two units reported a name change. The names included the following:

Home Economics and Family Living
Home Economics and Industrial Technology
Human Ecology
Human Development
Human Development and Family Studies
Human Resource Development
Family Resources
Family and Consumer Resources
Family Resources and Consumer Sciences
Family and Consumer Science
Family and Consumer Studies*
Consumer Related Sciences
Consumer Economics
Home and Community Services
Business and Resource Management[9]

For those units that changed their names, the following words, used singly or in combination, were the most conspicuous:

human (10)
family (7)
consumer (6)

---

*This was the name reported by the Lehman College Home Economics unit.

resource(s) (6)
development (6)
ecology (4)
science (3)
studies (2)
home (1)
services (1)
management (1)
living (1)
technology (1)
industrial (1)
business (1)
economic (1)[10]

Name changes reflect differences in status and support for the Home Economics curriculum within a given institution. Important in the 1960s and 1970s was the desire to attract men to what was viewed as a "woman's field." The probability that sexist and elitist biases exist in the context in which Home Economists operate cannot be ignored. While beyond the scope of this paper to examine in detail, it should be noted that after the name changes, an increased number of men majors was reported.[11]

It is not surprising that some confusion would result from such varied nomenclature, but each unit, by whatever name, followed a registered Home Economics curriculum. It is notable that although family well-being is a concern of Home Economics, no Home Economics unit reported the word "health" in its title.

In 1972 the Home Economics Department at Lehman College

changed its name to "Family and Consumer Studies." Both the name of the unit and the content of the curriculum were grounded in Home Economics, and it was an agency member unit (AMU) of the American Home Economics Association.

The HEGIS Taxonomy

When a single discipline is known by a variety of names, potential confusion can be eliminated by reference to a widely used and recognized taxonomy. The HEGIS taxonomy defines Home Economics programs as:

> A summary of groups of institutional programs that generally describes the understanding of the relationship between the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual environment in and of the home and family, and the development of individuals. Includes instruction in the natural and social sciences and humanities in the development of attitudes, knowledge, and ability pertaining to clothing and textiles, consumer education, food and nutrition, home management, housing, human development and family studies, and institutional management.[12]

To sort out the diverse "pieces of knowledge" that make up the subject matter areas of Home Economics, the HEGIS taxonomy provides the following Home Economics subcategories:

1300 Home Economics
1301 Home Economics, general
1302 Home decoration and equipment
1303 Clothing and textiles
1304 Consumer economics and home management
1305 Family relations and child development
1306 Foods and nutrition (includes dietetics)
1307 Institutional management and cafeteria management
1309 Other, specify[13]

The American Home Economics Association, the recognized accrediting agency for Home Economics programs, defines a major in Home Economics as a graduate of a prescribed and established sequence of courses "approved by the home economics faculty and the governing body of the institution."[14]

Thus, despite variety in the names of Home Economics administrative units, a Home Economics curriculum can be judged by a number of fairly clear and distinct criteria. Educators and administrators throughout the United States know and use the HEGIS taxonomy consistently to identify and register curricula. Students in Home Economics programs pursue a curriculum evidencing characteristics unique to the discipline. Those possessing bachelors' degrees in Home Economics (whatever their specialization) share a common background.

The Status Quo Ante

1946-1979

The Department of Home Economics at Lehman College began in 1946. In 1972, in line with changes taking place in other units, the Department's name was changed to Family and Consumer Studies. In response to an inquiry made by a State senator, the Deputy Commissioner of Higher Education Review in the New

York State Education Department stated that "Lehman has chosen to identify their offerings in Home Economics as Family and Consumer Studies."[15]

A College's Bulletin is a legal document. It contains the cumulative curriculum decisions of the faculty, setting forth the educational contract between the student and the College and the College and the State.

Before changes can be published in the Bulletin, they are presumed to have passed through the appropriate committees and been voted on by the faculty. Lehman College's 1979-1980 undergraduate Bulletin embodies the status quo at the time curricular changes were on the horizon. It lists three degree-granting programs under HEGIS code 1301 (Home Economics, general): a 40-credit B.A. in Family and Consumer Studies, a 53/64-credit B.S., and a B.A. in Home Economics teacher education whose requirements also included State certification requirements.[16] All majors were required to take core courses (drawn from the spectrum of Home Economics subject matter) that provided the unique integrative focus of the curriculum. The 53/64-credit B.S. degree, a "professional degree," allowed students to study in depth in one of the program's five subspecializations:

(1) general family and consumer studies education
(2) housing, family resources, and consumer studies
(3) clothing, textiles, and related arts
(4) family relations and child development
(5) foods, nutrition and dietetics[17]

Each of the above subspecializations conforms to categories in the HEGIS taxonomy.

The 1979-1980 Bulletin lists 52 courses in the Department. Fifteen were in the foods, nutrition, and dietetics specialization. In June 1979 the Department's competency-based Home Economics teacher education curriculum was submitted by the College to the State Education Department for approval.

In 1976 the College commissioned an evaluation of the Family and Consumer Studies Department and invited Professors Frances Parker, Chair of the Department of Home Economics at Oneonta College, State University of New York, and Mirium Brush, Chair of the Department of Nutrition at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey to the College. The questions posed by the Administration and the responses of the evaluators follow:

1) Does the present curriculum best serve the interest (i.e. well being) of the student body?

> The present curriculum focuses on the family and on the several areas of importance in preparation of professionals to serve the interests of the family and consumer. This is the same emphasis as any modern, present-day Home Economics department. The Lehman FCS department feels it has

profited from a different name, as have some others over the country; however, it is still in the main stream of home economics ....

.....

2) Would the students be better served if the component parts of the curriculum were distributed among other academic departments?

There is absolutely no question in our minds that the aforementioned proposal would be very unwise .... The integration of the family core provides a uniqueness to Home Economics programs. For example, sociologists approach family from an institutional/societal perspective whereas the home economist relates to the individual and family member within the home. Similarly, economists approach consumer economics from the business/societal viewpoint and we teach the individual about the impact of the economy on the individual and family or how not to be fleeced by business.

The intelligent citizen needs to understand both perspectives. Thus, rather than distributing components to other academic departments, more intra-institutional cooperation is in order.[18]

The Brush-Parker report recommended also that because many Home Economics courses have a theoretical, scientific, or humanitarian basis "which have resulted in Liberal Arts credit nationwide .... The Lehman College Curriculum Committee should recognize these qualities and award the appropriate distinction where feasible."[19] The College never acted on the Report's recommendations.

In 1978, the College's curricula were evaluated by the

Middle States Association which reported:

> The Department of Family and Consumer Studies is an interesting example of a small department building inter-disciplinary bridges with basic liberal arts departments to form programs which are fundamentally professional in orientation. This kind of grass roots response to the demanding opportunities presented by the changing nature of the student body is one of the more promising approaches we observed at Lehman.[20]

Thus, impartial evaluators selected by the Administration found the Family and Consumer Studies Department well within the conceptual framework of Home Economics and at the same time changing to meet the needs of students and the community.

This was a period when health services administration and nursing programs were receiving significant federal support. In 1978 the College contracted with District 1199, a health professions union, to provide education to upgrade selected health services personnel. The College created a Health Professions Institute in response to these emerging trends. After making favorable comments about the Institute's work, the Middle States evaluators called "certain matters of potential difficulty ... to the college's attention." They cautioned:

> 1. Lines of authority from HIP and Nursing to the central administration, and between the directors of Nursing and HIP, should be studied .... Informal understandings and even formal arrangements that are satisfactory

> now may prove unsatisfactory when different individuals fill director's [sic] role, and clarifying actions now can probably prevent this.
>
> 2. Faculty participating in HIP must be affiliated with an existing department .... The coordinator of Health Services Administration must thus be assigned to a department (Economics) in which she has no teaching responsibilities and with which she has limited professional affinity. This would raise serious questions about the process by which she will be evaluated for promotion and tenure....[21]

These events were not immediately perceived as threatening by the Family and Consumer Studies faculty, since they were intensely focused on their own departmental matters. They provide the background against which a series of changes could be examined.

The first harbinger of change occurred in October, 1979, when the Chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Studies was denied tenure. During the 1980 academic year, she was absent from the College while she pursued a successful union grievance against the College. Denial of tenure to the Chair, (who was ideologically aligned with the integrative character of the Home Economics curriculum), together with the imminent retirement of the remaining ranked faculty member, made the

Department vulnerable. Under the College's documents of governance, a department without a ranked faculty to comprise the Personnel and Budget (P&B) committee, is subject to an Administrative determination as to its viability.

The Context Changes

January-December 1980

In early January, 1980, two College Deans met with the faculty to discuss the changes precipitated by the events detailed above.

Contrary to the recommendations of the Brush-Parker Report, the Department's courses were now to be divided. The reassignment of faculty -- always a sensitive issue -- was scrupulously detailed with respect to job security. The arrangements satisfied the College's union representatives. But questions of "succession," i.e. whether the "newly named" Department would in fact be "doing business at the old stand" were never articulated. If so, seniority in a department, a major consideration in periods of retrenchment, would arise.

Discussions focused on the development of a "new" home and family life program -- a goal consistent with the Department's identity as a Home Economics unit. The continuation of courses in the food, nutrition, and dietetic specialization in

another department did not affect the totality of the curriculum. In February 1980, the College's competency-based Home Economics teacher education curriculum was registered by the State Education Department under HEGIS code 1301.01.[22]

Soon after, a memorandum summarizing the January "separation" talks was received by the faculty. It provided that:

> The undergraduate and graduate programs, courses, full-time faculty in Nutrition and Dietetics ... will join the Health Professions Institute and become part of a Department of Health Services ... and all other courses ... will be assigned to the Department of Specialized Services in Education.[23]

At the time of the above "separation document," the College had no Department of Health Services. Indeed, fiscal constraints precluded the College from establishing new departments or new programs. The procedures for establishing new departments in the CUNY system require extensive support and detailed documentation. They are also time consuming and cannot be accomplished overnight. The faculty in Family and Consumer Studies was focusing on the curricular changes mandated by the separation document rather than the administrative changes occurring at the same time. The problem of retaining a Home Economics curricular foundation for an

inter-departmental program seemed, to this writer, to be of paramount importance. So long as the program was registered as a Home Economics program, it should be governed by the tenets of Home Economics, not some other discipline. The New York State Education Law defines the pertinent curricular language:

> Course means "an organized series of instructional and learning activities dealing with a subject."
>
> Curriculum or program means "the formal educational requirements necessary to qualify for certification or degrees. A curriculum or program includes general education or specialized study in depth in a particular field.[24]

Using this language, how would a reasonable person interpret the "separation document"? How would a curriculum specialist interpret the document? Only courses in one subspecialization of Home Economics were being assigned to a new department. For the curriculum to continue, students registered for a Home Economics degree still had to take the core courses required in the Bulletin.

To protect against abrupt changes in program requirements, the New York State Education Law provides:

> Section 52.1 Registration of Postsecondary Curricula
>
> (a) 2. Registration is required for every curriculum leading to licensure or a profession;

3. every curriculum for which registration is required by statute, the Rules of the Regents, or any other section of these regulations;

(b) To be registered, each curriculum shall:

1. be submitted to the commissioner, together with such information as the commissioner may require, in a form acceptable to the commissioner;

2. conform to all applicable provisions of this Part; and

3. show evidence of careful planning ....

(d) Registration shall be granted only to individual curricula.

(f) Each course offered for credit by an institution shall be part of a registered curriculum offered by that institution, as a general education course, a major requirement, or an elective.

(g) Each curriculum for which registration is required shall be registered before the institution may publicize its availability or recruit or enroll students in the curriculum.

(h) New registration shall be required for any existing curriculum in which major changes are made that affect its title, focus, design, requirements for completion, or mode of delivery.

(k) Each institution shall notify the department in writing of the discontinuance of any registered program.[25]

Technically, these provisions afford the legal framework for the curriculum context. If followed, they protect both the student against ill-conceived and arbitrary changes in

curriculum and provide faculty with guidelines within which to plan curricular change. A curriculum, as an entity, exists apart from the administrative unit or units that house its courses. Home Economics could be reduced by Administrative fiat from Departmental to program status, but a curriculum cannot be Home Economics for some purposes and something else for other purposes. At the end of the line is the student's degree, and the B.S. degree at Lehman College was a professional degree in Home Economics. The "family focus" and the "core courses" were the "heart" of the Home Economics curriculum. Since they were being retained, the basics of the curriculum were moving to a new department. Home Economics was downgraded from Departmental to program status but, with the exception of food and nutrition courses to be administered elsewhere, the curriculum was still recognizable and identifiable as Home Economics. Most importantly, it retained custody of "Home Economics Education" - the College's original curricular mandate.

The question of "department name" was dealt with in the May 1980 University Report, which summarizes and circulates the actions of the University Senate:

1. The name of the Department of Family and Consumer Studies was changed to the Department of Health Services;

2. Faculty were to "follow" the courses they taught; food, nutrition, and dietetic faculty went to the Health Services department. Faculty who taught the core Home Economics courses and all the other specialized courses went to the Department of Specialized Services in Education;

3. There were to be no changes in "generic degree requirements."[26]

What really happened? Was an "instant department" created by virtue of a "name change" on paper? If so, would a similar name change, for example, from the Department of Astronomy to a Department of Agronomy be acceptable? There are some people who might be fooled by the fact that the names sound somewhat alike. The definition of a discipline is a rigorous exercise for curriculum designers. Could administrative alchemy transmogrify one discipline into another? Within this context, Health Services administrators repeatedly assured this writer that theirs was not a "Home Economics" department.

The changes were to be effective in September, 1980. The 1980-1981 Undergraduate Bulletin, available for the September 1980 semester, lists not 15 but 20 courses from the old Family and Consumer Studies curriculum now in the Health Professions Institute/Department of Health Services. Moreover,

they appear under a new curricular rubric, namely "Dietetics, Food, and Nutrition."[27] To the trained Home Economist's eye, this change in word order is highly signficant. It is an inversion of the normal course sequence which begins with foods and nutrition and is grounded in the Home Economics curriculum. It replaces it with dietetics, formerly an advanced professional specialization in the curriculum. A former member of the Family and Consumer Studies Department (a Nutrition Educator, not a Home Economist) became the "Director" of the new "program."

In Fall, 1980, old students began to register for courses. It was immediately apparent that students who had been in the Foods, Nutrition, and Dietetics specialization in Family and Consumer Studies were no longer enrolling for the core courses. New students bypassed the courses. Attempts to clarify this situation were not consistently addressed.

The College curriculum committee circulated the guidelines for revising curriculum with the following caveat:

> Before a new Program can be implemented the College has to receive notice of its registration from the State Education Department.[28]

This provision accords with the provisions of the State Education Law (page 20, supra). The College Curriculum

committee guidelines state also that "Curriculum changes approved by the Lehman College Senate should not be included in the schedule prior to action by the Board of Higher Education."[29]

The memorandum also stipulates that, to be included in the 1981-1982 catalogue, changes should be approved by the Lehman College Senate at or prior to the December 1980 meeting.[30] No such action to revise the Foods, Nutrition, and Dietetics subspecialization of the Family and Consumer Studies curriculum had been acted on. Although the catalog is a legal document, information contained in it appeared not to be grounded in the College's stated procedures for curriculum change.

The memorandum also provides that courses to be implemented in the Spring, 1981 semester should be approved by the Lehman College Senate at or prior to the September, 1980 meeting. The document also outlines procedures for formatting a change in the basic requirements for a degree, such as a change in the requirements of an established area of concentration.[31]

By another act of administrative alchemy, the Provost informed the College in November, 1980 that "The Department of Health Services now administers as a 53/64 B.S. degree."[32]

But it does not say a degree in what, although the degree was one in Home Economics. How can a department administer a Home Economics professional degree unless it is a Home Economics Department? Why bypass the Home Economics unit in the Department of Specialized Services?

The same memorandum informed the College that enrollment in the Family and Consumer Studies (Home Economics) programs assigned to the Department of Specialized Services were suspended as of February 1, 1981, pending an "approved revision of curriculum."[33] The College had created a new curriculum by administrative fiat.

When the Department of Health Services first circulated proposed changes in December 1980, it had missed the stated bulletin deadline for Senate approval for curricula to be listed in the College's next bulletin (1981-1982). One would expect the status quo to hold. This was not the case.

The proposed curriculum bore no HEGIS code number. It had no connection with historically required content as a Home Economics curriculum. It was not passed by the "Home Economics" faculty, now reduced to one full-time Mohican (this writer) assigned to the Department of Specialized Services. Not only had the College created a curriculum by fiat, was it also reclassifying the faculty's discipline by fiat?

Crisis of Conscience

January-December 1981

In March, 1981 (before the curriculum was passed by the Senate), the "new" Dietetics, Food and Nutrition program was distributed at a meeting of Home Economics Faculty at Queens College, another campus of the CUNY system. The March 20 meeting of the College Curriculum Committee tabled proposals from Health Services. The Minutes state:

> The Chairman notified the Committee of a complaint received from Professor Pat Thompson concerning the distribution of material by DFN containing their new curriculum prior to its approval by the Committee and, therefore, by the Senate and the Board. The Committee instructed the Chairman to make further inquiries in the matter and to report back to the Committee."[34]

On March 24, this writer raised the issue of the integrity of Home Economics degrees with the College's Office of Academic Standards. She was told they were not "Home Economics" degrees. They were "Lehman degrees." Another blind alley.

On April 27, the Student Conference passed a resolution calling for an immediate investigation of the mechanics used to eliminate the Family and Consumer Studies Department. When presented at the Lehman College Senate Meeting of April 29, the resolution was tabled. At the same meeting, the College

curriculum committee moved adoption of the new "Dietetics Food and Nutrition" curriculum, now bearing HEGIS code 1301. The motion passed.[35]

Students are among the first to recognize incongruities in curriculum requirements. In May 1980, two student senators (Family and Consumer Studies majors) aware that Food, Nutrition, and Dietetic students were no longer in their "core courses," wrote to the State Education Department. The student grapevine carried the news that students in the new department were no longer being advised to take the courses in the "old curriculum," but were taking the courses in the "new curriculum."

In September, the State Education Department wrote to the CUNY Central Office for an explanation. The new curriculum got stuck in the pipeline. Theoretically, the "old curriculum" was still in place and should have been followed. Moreover, if the new curriculum was to lead to a degree in Home Economics, as it would if it followed the HEGIS code number, it was a Home Economics degree on paper only. It lacked the academic preparation identified as essential for Home Economics.

On September 23, the Lehman Senate, acting on the Student Conference's April resolution, established an Ad Hoc Committee

to investigate the Family and Consumer Studies Department's demise.

On October 31, this writer attended a meeting of the American Association of University Professors at Columbia University Law School. One speaker came from the CUNY Central Office. In answer to a direct question from the writer, a State Education Department representative said that "to change the name of a department from Anthropology to Musicology because the Anthropology department offered courses in ethno-musicology would violate the HEGIS taxonomy.[36]

On November 1, immediately after the meeting, this writer wrote to CUNY Central concerning many of the facts outlined in this paper. A reply was received through the College mail. It included a letter from the Acting Deputy Chancellor of CUNY to the State Education Department. A curious document, the first page is dated November 20, but the last three pages are dated November 4. This suggests that the letter was delayed and some changes made in page 1 after it was first written. The letter stated:

> I concur with your suggestion that the recent changes approved by the Board on June 22, 1981, made in the Dietetics, Food, and Nutrition specialization of the Family and Consumer Studies [sic] warrant review and action by the

> Department. It is my view as well as that of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Planning, that that particular curriculum is no longer appropriately registered under the HEGIS category for Home Economics. It should rather bear the HEGIS designation 1306, Dietetics, Food, and Nutrition.[37]

This letter reads as though dictated by the Mad Hatter. Its language is divorced from the realities of the case. Reference to the HEGIS taxonomy, page 10 supra, shows that HEGIS code 1306 is a subspecialization of Home Economics. How can a curriculum both be and not be in Home Economics? Clearly, the curriculum derived its legitimacy by virtue of its registration, but the College was not willing to acknowledge this.

On November 19th, in anticipation of January graduation, this writer tried to learn the status of students who were candidates for the FCS B.S. degree. On December 9th, the Registrar advised:

> (1) Four (4) of the students have completed all of the "core courses" which you listed.
>
> (2) Two (2) of the candidates have approved FCS substitutions for one of the core courses.
>
> (3) Two (2) of the candidates will either complete the required courses or <u>will opt</u> for the new curriculum. (Emphasis supplied)[38]

This memorandum raises two curricular issues. Who approves substitutions in a discipline? Can "just anybody" evaluate substitutions? Or is that the prerogative of people in a discipline? If a person in the discipline and a person outside the discipline disagree, whose expertise should prevail? These are matters of academic conscience. Each practitioner of a discipline has a responsibility to preserve its curricular integrity. On point (3), how could a candidate opt for an as yet unregistered program?

On December 17, the following points were addressed to the Ad Hoc Committee on FCS Inquiry:

1. The home economics curriculum is the legitimate concern of the Department of Specialized Services in Education
2. The College violated State Education Law in the registration of curriculum
3. The Administration has intruded on Faculty prerogative in the making of curriculum
4. The legitimacy of the Health Services Department cannot be based on its assumption of Home Economics curriculum.[39]

None of these questions were ever addressed.

Crisis of Confidence

January-September 1982

At its February meeting, the Report of the Senate

Committee for FCS Inquiry was circulated to the faculty.

V. Findings

After careful examination and review of both written and oral materials presented to the committee we have unanimously concluded:

a. No evidence of procedural violations was found in the restructuring of the Department of Family and Consumer Studies, including the reassignment of faculty and the dividing of the programs into two broad areas: the B.S. program in FCS: Nutrition and Dietetics specialization which was assigned to the Health Professions Institute and the remaining specializations which were assigned to the Department of Specialized Services in Education. (These reassignments were approved by the College Faculty Personnel and Budget Committee on May 6, 1980 and by the Board of Trustees of the City University on May 27, 1980.)

b. Full provision was made by the college to insure that students currently enrolled in the various FCS programs would be able to complete their required course work in a timely fashion.

c. The Board resolution of May 27, 1980 provided for the protection of tenure, certification, and/or seniority at the time of reassignment for the full-time faculty and other instructional staff members who were reassigned.

d. The portion of the FCS program reassigned to the Health Services Department has completed program revisions and has in place an approved and functioning curriculum. (This curriculum, in Dietetics and Nutrition, was approved by the Lehman College Senate on April 29, 1981 and by the Board of Trustees of the City University on May 22, 1981.) The committee did note a discrepancy in the HEGIS Code Registration of

> the program. The committee has, however, been assured that the University is proceeding to effect an appropriate reclassification of this program within the New York State Education Department Office of Higher Education Academic Review.
>
> e. The programs and specializations reassigned to the Department of Specialized Services in Education have not, as of this date, formally submitted a revised curriculum to the college. Therefore they continue to operate under the old FCS curriculum.
>
> f. Unless and until the Department of Specialized services in Education presents, and gains approval of, a revised curriculum in the areas of Family and Consumer Studies assigned to their department, no new students will be permitted to enroll in these programs.[40]

No evidence of procedural violations! But a discrepancy in HEGIS code registration! This is more than a minor technical oversight. It strikes at the fundamental characteristics of a curriculum. To "effect an appropriate reclassification" is a move to change the curriculum post facto, without returning it for closer scrutiny by the body that passed it originally. The Ad Hoc Committee's report, while received, was not openly discussed nor acted upon. In the words of a Central Office planner, steps were being taken to register the curriculum in order that it accurately represent the current form and emphasis."[41]

In February 1982 (with a document misdated [February 24, 1981]) the Health Professions Institute asked that students enrolled in the "Dietetics, Food, and Nutrition specialization of the Family and Consumer Studies Program" be permitted to choose a "Geriatrics Team Option." The change was passed. Clearly, the curriculum has changed its focus - from family study to health study. The paperwork still maintained the illusion of a "Home Economics" grounding for the curriculum.

In voluminous, time-consuming correspondence, neither the College, the CUNY Central administration, nor the State had answered the critical questions of fact that had been raised. On the surface, papers were passing that gave a surface appearance of legitimacy. The content and intent of the papers thus "pushed through the pipeline," however, were incongruent with the appearance they created. Having failed to get direct answers within the educational system, the writer requested a letter on these questions be written on her behalf by a State senator, who wrote to the State Education Department:

> Are the graduate and undergraduate programs of record in Family and Consumer Studies registered with the State Education Department as home economics curricula?
>
> Are the B.A., B.S. ... degrees granted on completion of the registered programs in Family and Consumer Studies considered to be degrees in home economics?[42]

The answer was "yes" to both.[43]

At the Senate meeting of March 24, 1982, this writer made a lengthy appeal to the question that ended with the plea that a Lehman College degree be more than "just a piece of paper." The minutes read:

> On a point of personal privilege, Dr. Patricia Thompson commented on the Report of the Ad Hoc Senate Committee for FCS Inquiry that was received by the Senate at its meeting of February 24, 1982.[44]

In April 1982, the College curriculum committee received a revised curriculum in Family and Consumer Studies. On one pretext or another, one year later, the curriculum has yet to get "out of committee."

In the same month, this writer challenged the graduation of 18 candidates for the B.S. degree in Family and Consumer Studies.[45]

The Senate Minutes of April 28 state that

> Mrs. Thompson requested that page 2, lines 54-56, of the Minutes of March 24, 1982, be corrected to record the substance of her comments regarding the Report of [the] Ad Hoc Senate Committee for FCS Inquiry. President Lief stated that he would take this request under advisement.[46]

On April 30, 1982, this writer sent registered letters to Donald Nolan, Assistant Commissioner of Higher Education Academic Review at the State Education Department and also

to the State Education Department's counsel, Edward Stone. The letter to Mr. Stone included a signed deposition attesting to the fact that the students on the graduation list had not met the requirements for graduation.[47] It also called attention to the relevant sections of State Education Law barring institutions from enrolling students in unregistered curricula.

A telephone call to the State Education Department in early May elicited the information that a "new, free-standing program in Dietetics, Food and Nutrition under HEGIS code 1306 had been entered into the inventory of registered programs on May 6."[48] Written confirmation for this has not been forthcoming. However, on May 11 the Provost informed the College that "the B.S. degree in Dietetics, Foods and Nutrition has been registered with the State under HEGIS code 1306. All [the challenged] candidates for June graduation are in this program and are meeting its requirements."[49]

On June 2, the College's Commencement Program listed graduates as having earned the "B.S. in Dietetics, Food and Nutrition."[50]

Although my deposition was receipted May 1, 1982, no response on the issues raised in my letter and sworn statement

was ever forthcoming. Instead, the following "closure" occurred when Mr. Nolan wrote:

> The City University has proposed and the Department has approved, what we feel are the appropriate registration actions in this matter .... I do not believe it would be fruitful for Department staff to communicate further with you concerning this matter.[51]

IMPLICATIONS

At the very least, this study demonstrates the Pareto principle - that what seems to be happening is not what is really happening at the time. The Study raises a number of questions concerning the validity of a college credential when it is awarded retroactively and contrary to the requirements of a curriculum in a stated discipline, as identified by the HEGIS taxonomy. The fact that this was a curriculum in Home Economics does not diminish the significance of the events for other disciplines. Clearly, the College Administration, the University's Central Administration, and the State Education Department acted in concert to create an "instant curriculum." Such practices are contrary to the essence of sound education. They violate every tenet of curriculum theory and ideal practice.

Another issue of concern to statisticians. How does the contamination of a data base (HEGIS) when programs are incorrectly reported affect data collection, analysis and

dissemination? Figures can lie.

If a College can institute a curriculum retroactively and change its very nature as it passes through the administrative pipeline, what are the implications for the college credential? Is a college degree, as the cynics attest, "just a piece of paper," or does it warrant that the possessor has, indeed, pursued the requisite course of study as determined by persons knowledgeable in a discipline? In a time of retrenchment and financial exigency, does not this put too much power in the hands of planners and administrators and take too much away from faculty? An observation by Karl Marx seems appropriate in this context: "Circumstances are changed by men and the educator must himself be educated."

NOTES

[1]Harold Hodgkinson, "Higher Education Research -- What Have We Learned? What is Needed?" Symposium, Research in Post-Secondary Education. Sponsored by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the National Center for Educational Statistics (15 July 1982), Arlington, VA.

[2]Marlene Dixon, Things Which Are Done in Secret. Montreal: Black Rose Books (1976)

[3]Patricia J. Thompson, "Cracking the HEGIS Code." Paper presented to a symposium on Research in Post-Secondary Education sponsored by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the National Center for Education Statistics (15, 16 July 1982), Arlington, VA.

[4]American Home Economics Association. Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference: 1902. Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics, 1899-1908. Washington, D.C., p. 70-71.

[5]Selma F. Lippeatt and Helen I. Brown, Focus and Promise of Home Economics. New York: Macmillan (1965), p. 4.

[6]Patricia Durey Murphy, "What's In a Name?" Journal of Home Economics 59:9 (November 1967), p. 702.

[7]Cited in Murphy, Ibid., p. 703.

[8]S. Weis, M. East and S. Manning, "Home Economics Units in Higher Education: A Decade of Change." Journal of Home Economics 66:5 (1974), pp. 11-15.

[9]Ibid., p.12

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]National Center for Education Statistics. A Classification of Instructional Programs. Washington, D.C.: USDOE (1981), p. 93.

[13]Ibid., p. 154.

[14]American Home Economics Association. Bylaws. Washington, D.C. (Revised, 1980), p. 3.

[15]Letter. Donald J. Nolan to Hon. Franz S. Leichter (26 February, 1982), p. 2.

[16]Herbert H. Lehman College, Undergraduate Bulletin (1979-1980), pp. 75-76.

[17]Ibid., pp. 193-194.

[18]Miriam Brush and Frances Parker, Report to the Lehman College Administration on the Department of Family and Consumer Studies (28 February 1980).

[19]Ibid.

[20]Evaluation of Lehman College by the Middle States Association (1978). Mimeo.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Letter. Donald J. Nolan, State Education Department to Lehman President Leonard Lief (1 February 1980).

[23]Memorandum. From Ruth Walker and Richard Larson to Members of the Department of Family and Consumer Studies (28 February 1980).

[24]Regulations of the Commissioner of Education (Excerpts from the STate Education Law, effective 2 September 1980), Sect. 50.1 (g).

[25]Ibid., Sec. 52.1.

[26]Items for the University Report (Attachment A). City University of New York (27 May 1980).

[27]Herbert H. Lehman College, Undergraduate Bulletin (1981-1982), p. 208; pp. 70-71.

[28]Memorandum. From Lewis Scwartz, Chair of College Curriculum Committee to All Faculty (20 September 1980).

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Memorandum. Provost Frederick Shaw to Chairs and Administrators (18 November 1980).

[33]Ibid.

[34]Minutes. College Curriculum Meeting (20 March 1981).

[35]Minutes. Lehman College Senate (29 April 1981), lines 47-49.

[36]Field Notes. Meeting of the AAUP, Columbia University, (30 October 1981).

[37]Letter. Acting Deputy Chancellor Leon Goldstein to Dr. Donald Nolan, Assistant Commissioner, Higher Education Academic Review, State Education Department (20 November 1981). This letter is variously dated. Page 1 is dated November 20, 1981, the succeeding three pages are dated November 4, 1981. The excerpt is from pages 3-4, dated November 4, 1981. This suggests that parts of the letter were written at different times.

[38]Letter. Registrar. Charles Schreiber to Patricia J. Thompson (9 Dec. 1981).

[39]Patricia J. Thompson to Ad Hoc Committee on FCS Inquiry (4 Jan. 1982).

[40]Joseph Rachlin, Chair. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee for FCS Inquiry (21 January 1982). Received by Senate 24 April 1982.

[41]Letter. Mary Beth Taylor to Patricia J. Thompson. (20 Nov. 1981).

[42]Letter. Senator Franz S. Leichter to State Education Department (5 Feb. 1982).

[43]Letter. Donald Nolan to Franz S. Leichter (26 Feb. 1982).

[44]Minutes. Lehman College Senate (24 March 1982).

[45]Letter. Patricia J. Thompson to Provost R. Donaldson (26 April 1982).

[46]Minutes. Lehman College Senate (28 April 1982).

[47]Letter and sworn statement. Patricia J. Thompson to State Education Department (28 April 1982).

[48]Field Notes. May 7, 1982.

[49]Letter. Provost Robert H. Donaldson to Patricia J. Thompson (May 11, 1982).

[50]Commencement Program. Herbert H. Lehman College (2 June 1982).

[51]Letter. Donald Nolan to Patricia J. Thompson (20 May 1982).